



2006 Fiscal Report

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land. NRCS has six mission goals that include high quality, productive soils; clean and abundant water; healthy plant and animal communities; clean air; an adequate energy supply; and working farms and ranchlands.

Vision

Productive Lands -
Healthy Environment

Mission

Helping People Help the Land

CRP provides the opportunity for farmers and landowners to participate in a cost-effective, voluntary program to improve their land, water and wildlife resources; and to lock in a multi-year payment.

NRCS Program Manager

 **Natural Resources
Conservation Service**
HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND
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Drought conditions have created serious hardships for many farmers and ranchers in many parts of the country...In 2006 USDA expanded the CRP acreage open for emergency practices, such as haying and grazing, to provide relief for producers at a time when it is very much needed.

The Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's single largest environmental improvement program and has proven to be one of the most effective. The program allows landowners and operators to enter into 10- to 15-year contracts with USDA to convert highly erodible cropland and other environmentally sensitive cropland to vegetative cover such as introduced and native grasses, wildlife habitat and food-plot plantings, trees, filter strips, or riparian buffers. In exchange, landowners receive annual rental payments for the land and cost-share assistance for establishing certain conservation practices. CRP continues to be a popular conservation program in Colorado and in other Northern Plains states.

CRP Goals

- ◆ To reduce erosion
- ◆ To improve water quality
- ◆ To enhance wildlife habitat

Colorado CRP (as of October 2006)

- ◆ 2.37 million acres of cropland enrolled
- ◆ 13,236 contracts
- ◆ 39 out of 63 counties have contracts

- ◆ \$74 million total in rental payments annually
- ◆ \$31 per acre average rental payment
- ◆ 12,532 plans written with individual landowners
- ◆ 1.36 million acres of contracts are due to expire from 2006 to 2010, but all acres were offered contract extensions or re-enrollments requiring conservation plan modifications.

CRP's Continuous Sign-up

This feature of the program allows the landowner to establish certain conservation buffer practices on cropland and marginal pasture, and to enroll the land in CRP at any time without having to go through the process of submitting a competitive offer. Competitive offers are required during "regular" CRP signups. Conservation buffers help to control potential pollutants and manage other environmental concerns.

- ◆ Filter strips
- ◆ Field borders
- ◆ Grassed waterways
- ◆ Field windbreaks
- ◆ Shelterbelts
- ◆ Contour grass strips
- ◆ Riparian forest buffers